



**State of Wisconsin**  
**Department of Workforce Development**

**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**  
201 East Washington Avenue  
P.O. Box 7946  
Madison, WI 53707-7946  
Telephone: (608) 266-7552  
Fax: (608) 266-1784  
<http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/>  
e-mail: [dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:dwdsec@dwd.state.wi.us)

---

Monday, October 2, 2006  
Contact: Rose Lynch, DWD Director of Communications, 608-266-6753

## **Governor Doyle, Secretary Gassman Salute Workers with Disabilities** *3,100 people entered workforce last year*

**Madison** – Governor Jim Doyle today proclaimed October as Disability Employment Awareness Month to recognize the substantial contributions workers with disabilities are making to Wisconsin, its economy and their communities, and to focus public attention on the potential of others like them who are eager to join the workforce.

“We have a strong, growing economy and bright future, and one big reason is our superior workforce, including many talented people with disabilities,” Governor Doyle said. “We have revitalized Wisconsin’s economy and created more than 170,000 jobs through strategic investments in business, people and our infrastructure. I encourage business and labor leaders, educators and workers to help us create even more opportunities for people with disabilities to successfully enter the workforce.”

Department of Workforce Development Secretary Roberta Gassman said that last year, nearly 3,100 people with disabilities succeeded in entering the workforce, thanks to the work of the department’s Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and its local partners.

“These individuals enjoy the rewards of work, a new level of independence and better quality of life,” Secretary Gassman said. “We estimate that these individuals will have annual earnings totaling \$47.4 million, compared to the \$7.1 million in income they reported before receiving DVR services and gaining employment. This shows the tremendous return on public funds invested in vocational services.”

Secretary Gassman said that throughout the month, the Department will highlight the success of workers with disabilities who benefited from DVR services.

Besides a boost to the economy, DVR Administrator Charlene Dwyer said that the public benefits another way from investments in vocational rehabilitation services. When people with disabilities successfully enter the workforce, they rely less on social service programs.

“The Social Security Administration estimates that for every \$1 spent on a disabled adult of working age to help them gain employment, \$5 is saved in the public trust fund,” Administrator Dwyer said.

For information about employment and other services for people with disabilities in your area, contact your local DVR office or independent living center. For DVR offices, information is available at <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/locations/default.htm>; and for independent living centers, <http://www.dhfs.state.wi.us/Disabilities/Physical/ILCs.htm>